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Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Fifty-fifth session
(8-26 July 2013)

Fifty-sixth session
(30 September-18 October 2013)

Fifty-seventh session
(10-28 February 2014)

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Note

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[31 March 2014]

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Letter of transmittal

[31 March 2014]

I have the honour to refer to article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, according to which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established pursuant to the Convention, "shall, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its activities".

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held its fifty-fifth session, from 8 to 26 July 2013, its fifty-sixth session, from 30 September to 18 October 2013, and its fifty-seventh session, from 10 to 28 February 2014, at the United Nations Office at Geneva. It adopted its reports on the sessions at the 1156th meeting, on 26 July 2013, the 1184th meeting, on 18 October 2013, and the 1214th meeting, on 28 February 2014, respectively. These three reports of the Committee are herewith submitted to you for transmission to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

(*Signed*) Nicole **Ameline**
Chair

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Part One
Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its fifty-fifth session

8-26 July 2013

Chapter I

Matters brought to the attention of the States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Decisions

Decision 55/I

On 26 July 2013, the Committee adopted a statement on the role of women in the process of political transition in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. (See annex I to part one of the present report.)

Decision 55/II

On 26 July 2013, the Committee adopted a statement on strengthened cooperation with UN-Women. (See annex II to part one of the present report.)

Decision 55/III

The Committee decided to finalize the adoption of the draft general recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations during its fifty-sixth session.

Decision 55/IV

The Committee decided to allocate at least one full meeting during its fifty-sixth session for the first reading of its draft general recommendation on gender equality in the context of asylum, refugee status and statelessness.

Decision 55/V

On 26 July 2013, the Committee decided to transform the focal point on UN-Women into a standing Working Group, chaired by Nicole Ameline, and additionally composed of one member from each region, namely Feride Acar, Naela Gabr, Silvia Pimentel, Dubravka Šimonović and Xiaoqiao Zou, and entrusted it with the elaboration of a joint Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/UN-Women action plan for 2014-2015.

Decision 55/VI

The Committee decided to establish a standing Working Group on the Inter-Parliamentary Union, chaired by Nicole Ameline, and additionally composed of Nahla Haidar, Ismat Jahan, Dalia Leinarte, Pramila Patten and Patricia Schulz.

Decision 55/VII

The Committee confirmed Noor Al-Jehani, Patricia Schulz and Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla as members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/Human Rights Committee Working Group.

Decision 55/VIII

The Committee decided to appoint Violeta Neubauer as focal point for sexual and reproductive rights and Theodora Oby Nwankwo and Patricia Schulz as alternates.

Decision 55/IX

The Committee decided that each expert should sign up for a minimum of four country task forces per session, with the exception of country rapporteurs, and that the Secretariat should circulate a list on the membership of all country task forces prior to each session, with a view to ensuring that each country task force is composed of not less than 10 experts, in accordance with decision 52/VIII.

Decision 55/X

The Committee decided to consider the establishment of an intersessional mechanism to consider urgent matters, and requested the Secretariat to prepare a working paper for the fifty-sixth session on the practices of other treaty bodies in this regard, including on the early warning and urgent action procedure of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Decision 55/XI

The Committee decided that a final table of briefing and meeting requests received by the Secretariat from non-governmental organizations and other external partners shall be sent to the members of the Bureau one month prior to a session so that the Bureau can prioritize among those requests while leaving some flexibility for accommodating urgent and important requests received by the Secretariat after the closure of the list.

Decision 55/XII

The working group on access to justice was expanded to include Theodora Oby Nwankwo, in addition to the existing members: Feride Acar, Barbara Bailey, Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani, Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla, Hilary Gbedemah, Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Pramila Patten, Silvia Pimentel (Chair), Patricia Schulz, Dubravka Šimonović and Xiaoqiao Zou.

Chapter II
Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention and to the Optional Protocol

1. On 26 July 2013, the closing date of the fifty-fifth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were 187 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[1] which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York on 1 March 1980. In accordance with its article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981. In addition, 68 States parties had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, concerning the Committee's meeting time. A total of 125 States parties to the Convention are currently required to accept the amendment in order to bring it into force, in accordance with its provisions.

2. As at the same date, there were 104 States parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention,[2] which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/4 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York on 10 December 1999. In accordance with its article 16, the Optional Protocol entered into force on 22 December 2000.

3. Updated information on the status of the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and its Optional Protocol, and lists of States signatories and parties and the texts of declarations, reservations, objections and other relevant information, are available from the website of the United Nations Treaty Collection (http://treaties.un.org), maintained by the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs, which discharges the depositary functions of the Secretary-General.

B. Opening of the session

4. The Committee held its fifty-fifth session at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 8 to 26 July 2013. The Committee held 23 plenary meetings and also held 21 meetings to discuss agenda items 5, 6, 7 and 8. A list of the documents before the Committee is contained in annex III to part one of the present report.

5. The session was opened by the Chair of the Committee, Nicole Ameline, on 8 July 2013, at its 1128th meeting.

C. Adoption of the agenda

6. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda (CEDAW/C/55/1) at its 1128th meeting.

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[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[2] Ibid., vol. 2131, No. 20378.

D. Report of the pre-session working group

7. The report of the pre-session working group (CEDAW/PSWG/55/1), which met from 22 to 25 October 2012, was introduced by the Chair of the Committee, Nicole Ameline, at the 1128th meeting.

E. Organization of work

8. On 8 July 2013, the Committee held a closed meeting with representatives of the specialized agencies, Funds and Programmes of the United Nations system, and other intergovernmental organizations, during which those bodies provided country-specific information and information on the efforts they had made to support the implementation of the Convention.

9. On 8 and 15 July 2013, the Committee held informal public meetings with representatives of non-governmental organizations and three national human rights institutions, who provided information on the implementation of the Convention by the States parties whose reports the Committee had considered at its fifty-fifth session.

10. On 22 July 2013, the Committee held a meeting with Kareen Jabre, Manager of the Gender Partnership Programme, Inter-Parliamentary Union, to discuss future cooperation of the Committee with the Inter-Parliamentary Union in relation to the implementation of the Convention.

11. On 25 July 2013, the Committee held a high-level panel discussion on HIV/AIDS and women's rights, organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN-Women and the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations Office at Geneva. The panel discussion was chaired by the Director of the UNDP Representation Office at Geneva, Petra Lantz, and was opened by the Chair of the Committee, Nicole Ameline. It was closed by the Acting Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women, Lakshmi Puri. The Executive Director of the AIDS Law Project Kenya, Jacinta Nyachae; the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Flavia Pansieri; the Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS, Jan Beagle; and Committee member Theodora Oby Nwankwo participated in the panel.

F. Membership of the Committee

12. All members attended the fifty-fifth session. Maria-Helena Pires did not attend the first three days of the session. Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani was not able to attend the last two weeks of the session. Niklas Bruun did not attend the last three days of the session. A list of members of the Committee, indicating the duration of their terms of office, is contained in annex VIII to part two of the present report.

Chapter III

Report of the Chair on the activities carried out between the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions of the Committee

13. At the 1128th meeting, the Chair presented her report on the activities she had undertaken since the fifty-fourth session of the Committee.

Chapter IV

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

14. At its fifty-fifth session, the Committee considered the reports of eight States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention: the combined initial and second periodic report of Afghanistan; the combined fourth and fifth periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the combined seventh and eighth periodic report of Cape Verde; the combined seventh and eighth periodic report of Cuba; the combined sixth and seventh periodic report of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the combined sixth and seventh periodic report of the Dominican Republic; the combined second and third periodic report of Serbia; and the seventh periodic report of the United Kingdom.

15. The Committee prepared concluding observations on each of the reports considered. The concluding observations are available through the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/) under the symbols indicated below:

Afghanistan	(CEDAW/C/AFG/CO/1-2)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	(CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/4-5)
Cape Verde	(CEDAW/C/CPV/CO/7-8)
Cuba	(CEDAW/C/CUB/CO/7-8)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	(CEDAW/C/COD/CO/6-7)
Dominican Republic	(CEDAW/C/DOM/CO/6-7)
Serbia	(CEDAW/C/SRB/CO/2-3)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	(CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/7)

It is noted that the consideration of the combined second and third periodic report of Serbia had originally been scheduled for the fifty-third session. However, at the request of the State party, it was postponed to the fifty-fifth session.

Follow-up procedures relating to concluding observations

16. The Committee adopted the report of the Rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations at its fifty-fifth session, and considered the follow-up reports received from the following States parties:

Argentina	(CEDAW/C/ARG/CO/6/Add.1)
Australia	(CEDAW/C/AUL/CO/7/Add.1)
Czech Republic	(CEDAW/C/CZE/CO/5/Add.1)

17. The Committee considered additional follow-up information received from the following States parties:

Guatemala	(CEDAW/C/GTM/CO/7/Add.2)
Japan	(CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/6/Add.2)

The follow-up reports and additional follow-up information received from States parties and the Committee's replies are available through the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/) under the symbols indicated above.

18. The Committee also sent first reminders to the following States parties whose follow-up reports were overdue: Albania, Bangladesh, Belarus, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Malta, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Uganda.

19. The Committee sent second reminders to the following States parties whose follow-up reports were overdue: Libya and Papua New Guinea.

20. The Committee sent a further invitation to meet with representatives of Liberia, which had not submitted its follow-up report despite two reminders sent by the Committee, nor replied to two letters sent at the fifty-third and fifty-fourth sessions, respectively, to schedule a meeting with representatives of the State party. The representatives of Liberia were not available for a meeting during the fifty-fifth session. However, prior to the fifty-fifth session, the State party had contacted the Secretariat to request guidance for the preparation of its follow-up report.

Chapter V

Activities carried out under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

21. Article 12 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention provides that the Committee shall include in its annual report under article 21 of the Convention a summary of its activities under the Optional Protocol.

A. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 2 of the Optional Protocol

22. On 15, 22 and 26 July 2013, the Committee discussed activities under the Optional Protocol.

23. The Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its twenty-fifth (see A/68/38, part three, annex IX) and twenty-sixth (see annex IV to part one of the present report) sessions.

24. The Committee adopted final decisions with regard to three individual communications submitted under article 2 of the Optional Protocol. The Committee adopted inadmissibility decisions on communication No. 33/2011 (*M.N. v. Denmark*), by vote, and on communications No. 35/2011 (*E.N. v. Denmark*) and No. 40/2012 (*M.S. v. Denmark*), by consensus. It also declared admissible one communication, by consensus. The decisions are available through the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/) under the symbols CEDAW/C/D/33/2011, CEDAW/C/55/D/35/2011 and CEDAW/C/55/D/40/2012, respectively.

B. Follow-up to views of the Committee on individual communications

25. No follow-up progress report was prepared for the fifty-fifth session. The Committee did not take a decision to put the follow-up dialogue to an end in any of the cases currently under follow-up examination. Of the nine cases that are currently under follow-up examination, one relates to Belarus, one to Brazil, three to Bulgaria, one to Canada, one to Peru, one to the Philippines and one to Turkey.

C. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 8 of the Optional Protocol

26. The Committee was briefed on the status of all pending submissions and proceedings under the inquiry procedure.

27. On 24 July 2013, the Committee adopted its findings, comments and recommendations in relation to inquiry No. 2010/1 and decided to transmit them to the State party concerned.

28. The members designated by the Committee to conduct inquiry No. 2011/1 held a meeting with representatives of the State party concerned in preparation of a visit to its territory.

29. In relation to submission No. 2011/3, the Committee decided to request the State party concerned to submit observations with regard to the information received under article 8 of the Optional Protocol.

Chapter VI
Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

30. During its fifty-fifth session, the Committee considered agenda item 7, on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee. The Committee was informed about the status of the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system (General Assembly resolution 66/254). The Chair, Nicole Ameline, briefed the Committee about the outcome of the twenty-fifth annual meeting of chairs of the human rights treaty bodies, which had taken place in New York from 20 to 24 May 2013.

Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 7

Dates of future sessions of the Committee

31. In accordance with the calendar of conferences, dates were confirmed as follows for the Committee's fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions and related meetings:

Fifty-sixth session (Geneva)

(a) Twenty-seventh session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention: 24-27 September 2013;

(b) Fifty-sixth session: 30 September-18 October 2013;

(c) Pre-session working group for the fifty-eighth session: 21-25 October 2013.

Fifty-seventh session (Geneva)

(d) Twenty-eighth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention: 4-7 February 2014;

(e) Fifty-seventh session: 10-28 February 2014;

(f) Pre-session working group for the fifty-ninth session: 3-7 March 2014.

Reports to be considered at future sessions of the Committee

32. The Committee confirmed that it would consider the reports of the following States parties at its fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions:

Fifty-sixth session:

Andorra

Benin

Cambodia

Republic of Moldova

Seychelles

Tajikistan

It is noted that the consideration of St. Vincent and the Grenadines was also scheduled for the fifty-sixth session. It submitted its combined fourth to eighth periodic report on 13 August 2013 and the consideration was subsequently postponed to a future session of the Committee to allow for the translation of the report and the establishment of a new and/or updated list of issues at the pre-session working group.

Fifty-seventh session:

Bahrain

Cameroon

Finland

Iraq

Kazakhstan

Qatar

Sierra Leone

It is noted that the consideration of Senegal in the absence of a report was also scheduled for the fifty-seventh session. Senegal submitted its combined third to seventh periodic report on 31 July 2013 and the consideration was subsequently postponed to the sixty-first session to allow for the translation of the report and the establishment of the list of issues at the pre-session working group.

Chapter VII
Implementation of article 21 of the Convention

33. During the fifty-fifth session, the Committee considered agenda item 6, on the implementation of article 21 of the Convention.

Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 6

Joint general recommendation on harmful practices

34. The working group revised the draft general recommendation/comment on harmful practices at three meetings it held during the session. It agreed to convene a working meeting of the joint working group of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/Committee on the Rights of the Child on 6 October 2013 to finalize the draft of the joint general recommendation/comment on harmful practices.

General recommendation on women in conflict and post-conflict situations

35. The Committee completed its first reading of the draft general recommendation.

General recommendation on access to justice

36. The working group met during the session.

Working group on gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum and statelessness

37. The working group did not meet during the session, but changed its name from working group on gender equality in the context of asylum and statelessness.

Working group on rural women

38. The working group did not meet during the session. It had been informed between sessions by the Secretariat on the status of preparation for the half-day of general discussion on rural women to be held on 7 October 2013.

Working group on climate change and natural disasters

39. The working group did not meet during the session.

Working group on the right to education

40. The working group met during the session. On 24 July 2013, it held a telephone conference with Professor Mohamed Mattar from Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C., to discuss a concept note on the right to education prepared by him. The working group also discussed the next steps for elaborating a general recommendation on the right to education, i.e., the completion and presentation to the Committee of a draft concept note at the fifty-seventh session in February 2013 and the organization of a half-day of general discussion on the right to education, tentatively during the fifty-ninth session in July 2014.

Working group on working methods

41. The working group met during the session.

Chapter VIII
Provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session

42. The Committee considered the draft provisional agenda for its fifty-sixth session at its 1156th meeting, on 26 July 2013, and approved the following provisional agenda for that session:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Report of the Chair on activities undertaken between the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions of the Committee.
4. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
5. Follow-up to concluding observations of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Implementation of articles 21 and 22 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
7. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
8. Activities of the Committee under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
9. Provisional agenda for the fifty-seventh session of the Committee.
10. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-sixth session.

Chapter IX
Adoption of the report

43. The Committee considered the draft report on its fifty-fifth session and addenda on 26 July 2013 and adopted it as orally revised during the discussion.

Annex I

Decision 55/I
Statement by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the role of women in the process of political transition in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia

Adopted on 26 July 2013

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has been following with deep interest the process of political transition in three States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, namely Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, particularly in relation to the situation of women.

In this context, the Committee recalls that women's rights are fundamentally linked to peace, security and sustainable development. The Committee further reaffirms that the Convention and its Optional Protocol provide a comprehensive and overarching international legally binding framework for the prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, including violence against women, as a cross-cutting issue that is also addressed in other international human rights instruments.

The Committee is, however, distressed about attempts to discredit the Convention. It recalls that all States parties have the legal obligation to implement all the provisions of the Convention in all political, social or economic contexts, and to take all appropriate measures to prohibit and prevent violations of women's rights.

The Committee urges all States parties to strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls and to ensure that custom, tradition, and cultural or religious considerations are not invoked to justify non-compliance with their legal obligations under the Convention.

The Committee further expresses concern about the limited political participation of women and their risk of exclusion and marginalization, despite their active role during the transition processes in their respective countries.

The Committee urges concerned Governments, in cooperation with the relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, non-governmental organizations and all other relevant actors, to fully comply with their obligations to implement the Convention in order to enable women to enjoy all their human rights on an equal basis with men, and to enhance awareness of the fact that the Convention constitutes a common standard of humanity to which all civilizations and cultures contribute.

The Committee is at the disposal of concerned States parties to assist them in these efforts.

Annex II

Decision 55/II
Statement by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on strengthened cooperation with UN-Women

Adopted on 26 July 2013

1. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women warmly welcomes the appointment of Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as Executive Director of UN-Women, in consideration of her eminent position and experience.

2. The Committee recalls that equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of sustainable development, peace and democracy, and considers that UN-Women has a key role to play in supporting States parties in the implementation of their legally binding obligations under the Convention and other norms and standards for the protection and advancement of women.

3. The Committee considers that the post-2015 development agenda provides an opportunity to establish new links between human rights treaty bodies and development entities and to guarantee a more efficient use of financial resources. The empowerment of women and the effective realization of women's rights under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should be a primary consideration in any such efforts.

4. The Committee highlights that within the ongoing process of developing the post-2015 development agenda, the Convention provides, through its holistic approach, a universal basis for the achievement of formal as well as substantive equality between women and men.

5. The Committee appreciates the existing relations with UN-Women and the Commission on the Status of Women, and welcomes the implementation of the System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It also looks forward to exploring ways and means to establish stronger cooperation between the Committee and the United Nations system, especially the gender entities, in order to contribute to a better synergy to achieve gender equality and to maximize the benefits for women on the ground.

6. The Committee considers that its cooperation with UN-Women needs to be consolidated through a formal and institutional partnership, which includes:

(a) The Committee's participation in international, regional and national meetings on the advancement of women;

(b) The reinforcement of its cooperation with UN-Women and the entire United Nations system, especially in promoting and implementing the Convention, in line with the Committee's general recommendations and concluding observations;

(c) The consolidation of the support for building national human and technical capacities on gender issues;

(d) The organization of a special event in 2014 in New York on women's rights and development.

Annex III

Documents before the Committee at its fifty-fifth session

Document number	*Title or description*
CEDAW/C/55/1	Provisional agenda and annotations
CEDAW/C/55/2	Note by the secretariat on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee
CEDAW/C/55/3	Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
CEDAW/C/55/4	Report of the International Labour Organization
Reports of States parties	
CEDAW/C/AFG/1-2	Combined initial and second periodic reports of Afghanistan
CEDAW/C/BIH/4-5	Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina
CEDAW/C/CPV/7-8	Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Cape Verde
CEDAW/C/CUB/7-8	Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Cuba
CEDAW/C/COD/6-7	Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
CEDAW/C/DOM/6-7	Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the Dominican Republic
CEDAW/C/SRB/2-3	Combined second and third periodic reports of Serbia
CEDAW/C/GBR/7	Seventh periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Annex IV

Report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on its twenty-sixth session

1. The Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women held its twenty-sixth session in Geneva on 4 and 5 July 2013. All members attended the session (Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla, Niklas Bruun, Yoko Hayashi, Pamila Patten, Dubrevka Šimonović).

2. At the beginning of the session, the Working Group adopted its agenda as set out in the appendix to the present report.

3. The Working Group then reviewed the update on new correspondence received since the previous session as prepared by the Secretariat (a table reflecting the correspondence received and/or processed between 26 February and 28 June 2013, and a comprehensive table dividing it into six categories); the Working Group asked and it was agreed that the table be moved in front of the relevant section.

4. The Working Group decided to register three new communications (Nos. 56/2013, 57/2013 and 58/2013) and to transmit the correspondence to the States parties concerned, with no requests for interim measures of protection. The Working Group took note of the fact that the Secretariat was awaiting receipt of requests for clarifications addressed to authors of communications concerning Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Further clarifications would be sought regarding a communication concerning Azerbaijan.

5. During its twenty-sixth session, the Working Group also reviewed the status of all individual communications registered under the Optional Protocol pending examination, and had a discussion on each of them. The Working Group decided to request the Secretariat to prepare draft decisions to be examined during the twenty-seventh session in September 2013 in relation to communications Nos. 39/2012 (inadmissibility), 44/2012 (either admissibility decision or discontinuance) and 41/2012 (inadmissibility based on non-exhaustion of domestic remedies).

6. Concerning communication No. 46/2012, the Working Group decided to issue a request for interim measures of protection.

7. The Working Group decided to seek updated information from the parties to the proceedings concerning communications Nos. 42/2012 (status of the proceedings before the Council of State); 44/2012 (confirmation that the author is still interested in pursuing the communication); and 50/2013 (reminder to the authors to submit comments on the State party's observations).

8. The Working Group also discussed two draft recommendations in cases Nos. 24/2009 and 29/2011, pending final review by the Working Group.

9. The Working Group was informed of all new submissions and provided with updated information on the status of all cases in which the follow-up dialogue with the States parties concerned (Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Peru and Turkey)

was ongoing. The Working Group decided to convene a meeting with the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the United Nations Office at Geneva to discuss follow-up matters regarding the three views concerning Bulgaria finding violations of rights under the Convention (20/2008, *V.K. v. Bulgaria*; 31/2011, *V.P. v. Bulgaria* and 32/2011, *Jallow v. Bulgaria*); to ask the Secretariat to send a note verbale to Brazil, taking note of the technical error in relation to the exact amount to be paid in case No. 18/2008 and seeking clarification as to whether such compensation had been paid. The Working Group decided to keep the follow-up dialogue ongoing with regard to all cases currently under follow-up examination.

10. The Working Group also decided that the note by the Secretariat should indicate when authors of communications are represented by counsel.

Action taken at the present session

11. At its twenty-fifth session, the Working Group decided:

(a) To refer for adoption at the plenary meeting a recommendation in relation to communication No. 24/2009 (admissibility), with all members supporting the recommendation (pending final review by the Working Group);

(b) To refer for adoption at the plenary meeting a recommendation in relation to communication No. 29/2010 (views, no violation), adopted by consensus (pending final review by the Working Group);

(c) To request the Secretariat to prepare draft recommendations for the twenty-seventh session of the Working Group regarding communications Nos. 39/2012 (inadmissibility), 41/2012 (inadmissibility for non-exhaustion of domestic remedies), and, if possible, 44/2012 (either admissibility decision or discontinuance);

(d) To request the Secretariat to prepare, for the twenty-seventh session, a list of all pending registered cases ready for decision, in order to allow the Working Group to prioritize its work;

(e) To accede to the author's request and grant interim measures of protection in relation to communication No. 46/2012;

(f) To seek further information from the parties to the proceedings in relation to communications Nos. 42/2012, 44/2012 and 50/2013;

(g) To register three new communications: Nos. 56/2013 (Rapporteur: Yoko Hayashi); 57/2013 (Rapporteur: Olinda Bareiro); and 58/2013 (Rapporteur: Niklas Bruun);

(h) To request the secretariat to keep uploading on the Optional Protocol extranet academic resources cited in the note by the secretariat and to make copies of excerpts available upon request;

(i) To request the secretariat to prepare information on the follow-up procedure, including summaries of submissions received from the parties;

(j) To request the secretariat to arrange a meeting with the representatives of the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria on follow-up to the views on three individual

communications to discuss the measures taken by the State party to give effect to the Committee's recommendations;

(k) To reiterate its request that the secretariat include information on the Committee's jurisprudence web page regarding all discontinued cases, with a brief explanation of the reasons for discontinuation.

12. Regarding its intersessional work and internal working methods, the Working Group decided to continue its discussion on modalities for follow-up to views during its twenty-seventh session, including on modalities for closure of cases.

13. The Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women decided to hold its twenty-seventh session in Geneva, from 24 to 27 September 2013.

Appendix

Agenda of the twenty-sixth session of the Working Group

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Review of steps and activities undertaken since the previous session.
3. New communications registered and appointment of new rapporteurs.
4. Discussion on cases ready for adoption and preliminary discussion.
5. Cases for discontinuance.
6. Update on communications (registered cases).
7. Update on follow-up to views.
8. Discussion on working methods, including follow-up to views.
9. Adoption of the report of the Working Group on its twenty-sixth session.

Part Two
Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its fifty-sixth session

30 September-18 October 2013

Chapter I

Matters brought to the attention of the States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Decisions

Decision 56/I

On 18 October 2013, the Committee adopted general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations,[1] unanimously by roll-call vote.

Decision 56/II

The Committee decided to extend the term of Barbara Bailey as rapporteur on follow-up and to appoint Xiaoqiao Zou as alternate rapporteur, both for a period of one year until 31 December 2014.

Decision 56/III

The Committee also confirmed the members of the pre-session working group for the fifty-eighth session, i.e., Noor Al-Jehani, Nicole Ameline, Barbara Bailey, Naela Gabr and Violeta Neubauer.

Decision 56/IV

The Committee decided to continue the practice of publicly webcasting its dialogues with States parties and other public meetings beyond the trial period stipulated in decision 54/7 for an indefinite period until such time as it may decide otherwise. (See annex I to part two of the present report.)

Decision 56/V

The Committee decided to revise the standard paragraph on national parliaments in its concluding observations as follows: "The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see the statement by the Committee on 'The relationship of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women with Parliamentarians', forty-fifth session, 2010). It invites Parliament, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting period under the Convention."

Decision 56/VI

The Committee decided to hold a half day of general discussion on the right to education during its fifty-eighth session.

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[1] The text of general recommendation No. 30 is available from the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org) under the symbol CEDAW/C/GC/30.

Decision 56/VII

The working group on rural women was expanded to include Noor Al-Jehani, Theodora Oby Nwankwo and Biancamaria Pomeranzi, in addition to the existing members Barbara Bailey, Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani, Niklas Bruun, Naela Gabr (Chair), Ismat Jahan, Maria-Helena Pires and Xiaoqiao Zou.

Decision 56/VIII

The working group on gender equality in the context of climate change and natural disasters was expanded to include Hilary Gbedemah, in addition to the existing members Noor Al-Jehani, Nahla Haidar, Yoko Hayashi (Chair), Ismat Jahan and Xiaoqiao Zou.

Chapter II
Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention and to the Optional Protocol

1. On 18 October 2013, the closing date of the fifty-sixth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were 187 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York on 1 March 1980. In accordance with its article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981. In addition, 68 States parties had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, concerning the Committee's meeting time. A total of 125 States parties to the Convention are currently required to accept the amendment in order to bring it into force, in accordance with its provisions.

2. As at the same date, there were 104 States parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/4 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York on 10 December 1999. In accordance with its article 16, the Optional Protocol entered into force on 22 December 2000.

3. Updated information on the status of the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and its Optional Protocol, as well as lists of States signatories and parties and the texts of declarations, reservations, objections and other relevant information, is available from the website of the United Nations Treaty Collection (http://treaties.un.org), which is maintained by the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs, which discharges the depositary functions of the Secretary-General.

B. Opening of the session

4. The Committee held its fifty-sixth session at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 30 September to 18 October 2013. The Committee held 20 plenary meetings and also held 20 meetings to discuss agenda items 5, 6, 7 and 8. A list of the documents before the Committee is contained in annex VII to part two of the present report.

5. At its 1157th meeting, on 30 September 2013, the session was opened by the Chair of the Committee, Nicole Ameline.

C. Adoption of the agenda

6. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda (CEDAW/C/56/1) at its 1157th meeting.

D. Report of the pre-session working group

7. The report of the pre-session working group (CEDAW/PSWG/56/1), which met from 4 to 8 March 2013, was introduced by Violeta Neubauer at the 1157th meeting.

E. Organization of work

8. On 30 September 2013, the Committee held a closed meeting with representatives of the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental organizations, during which those bodies provided country-specific information and information on the efforts they had made to support the implementation of the Convention.

9. On 30 September and 7 October 2013, the Committee held informal public meetings with representatives of non-governmental organizations who provided information on the implementation of the Convention in the States parties considered by the Committee at its fifty-sixth session.

10. On 7 October 2013, the Committee held a meeting with a delegation of national Parliamentarians attending the 129th Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (Geneva, 7 to 9 October 2013). The discussion focused on possible ways of strengthening cooperation in relation to the implementation of the Convention and of the Committee's concluding observations at the national level.

11. On 11 October 2013, the Committee held a meeting with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, François Crépeau, who briefed the Committee on his work, including in relation to migrant women.

12. On 14 October 2013, the Committee and the Human Rights Committee held a joint informal consultation. At the meeting, which was hosted by the Centre for Reproductive Rights, both Committees were briefed on and discussed issues of common concern in relation to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

13. On 16 October 2013, the Committee attended a reception hosted by the City of Geneva to continue the common dialogue on the advancement of women.

F. Membership of the Committee

14. All members attended the fifty-sixth session, with the exception of Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani. Feride Acar did not attend the session from 30 September to 4 October and from 16 to 18 October 2013. Noor Al-Jehani did not attend the session on 3 and 4 October. Nicole Ameline was not able to attend the session from 8 to 11 October. Barbara Bailey was not able to attend the session on 30 September and 1 October. Niklas Bruun did not attend the session on 11 October. Ruth Halperin Kaddari did not attend the session on 4 and 11 October. Biancamaria Pomeranzi did not attend the session on 9 October. Dubravka Simonovic did not attend the session from 1 to 4 October and on 17 and 18 October. A list of members of the Committee, indicating the duration of their terms of office, is contained in annex VIII to part two of the present report.

Chapter III

Report of the Chair on the activities carried out between the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions of the Committee

15. At the 1157th meeting, the Chair, Nicole Ameline, presented a report on the activities she had undertaken since the fifty-fifth session of the Committee.

Chapter IV

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

16. At its fifty-sixth session, the Committee considered the reports of seven States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention: the combined second and third periodic report of Andorra; the fourth periodic report of Benin; the combined fourth and fifth periodic report of Cambodia; the combined seventh and eighth periodic report of Colombia; the combined fourth and fifth periodic report of the Republic of Moldova; the combined initial, second, third, fourth and fifth periodic report of Seychelles; and the combined fourth and fifth periodic report of Tajikistan.

17. The Committee adopted concluding observations on each of the reports considered. The concluding observations are available through the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/) under the symbols indicated below:

Andorra	(CEDAW/C/AND/CO/2-3)
Benin	(CEDAW/C/BEN/CO/4)
Cambodia	(CEDAW/C/KHM/CO/4-5)
Colombia	(CEDAW/C/COL/CO/7-8)
Republic of Moldova	(CEDAW/C/MDA/CO/4-5)
Seychelles	(CEDAW/C/SYC/CO/1-5)
Tajikistan	(CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/4-5)

18. It is noted that consideration of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in the absence of a report was also scheduled for the fifty-sixth session. However, on 5 August 2013, it submitted its combined fourth to eighth periodic report, and the consideration was subsequently postponed to the sixty-first session to allow for the translation of the report and the establishment of a new and/or updated list of issues at the pre-session working group.

Follow-up procedures relating to concluding observations

19. The Committee considered the follow-up reports received from the following States parties:

Bhutan	(CEDAW/C/BTN/CO/7/Add.1)
Israel	(CEDAW/C/ISR/CO/4/Add.1)
Malawi	(CEDAW/C/MWI/CO/6/Add.1)
Uzbekistan	(CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1)

The follow-up reports of the States parties and the Committee's replies are available from the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/) under the symbols indicated above.

20. The Committee also sent first reminders to the following States parties whose follow-up reports were overdue: Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Zambia.

21. The Committee sent a reminder regarding the submission of additional information to Fiji.

22. Representatives of Haiti, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Panama and the United Arab Emirates, which had not submitted their follow-up reports despite reminders sent by the Committee, were invited for a meeting.

23. The Committee met with representatives of Panama and the United Arab Emirates and received the follow-up report of the Lao People's Democratic Republic during the session.

Assessment of the procedure on follow-up to concluding observations

24. The Committee adopted the assessment of the follow-up procedure (see annex VI to part two of the present report), presented by the Rapporteur on follow-up in accordance with a decision taken at the fiftieth session, in October 2011. In the assessment, the Rapporteur on follow-up observed that the follow-up procedure was serving its stated purpose as a tool of implementation of the Convention. The Rapporteur on follow-up recommended that the follow-up procedure under article 18 of the Convention should be continued and that the next evaluation process be carried out at the sixty-fifth session of the Committee, to be held in October 2016.

Appointment of a new rapporteur on follow-up and of an alternate rapporteur

25. The term of Barbara Bailey as Rapporteur on follow-up and that of Yoko Hayashi as alternate rapporteur were about to expire on 31 December 2013. Owing to other responsibilities within the Committee, Ms. Hayashi was unable to succeed to Ms. Bailey as Rapporteur on follow-up. The Committee therefore decided to extend the term of Ms. Bailey as Rapporteur on follow-up in order to ensure continuity and to appoint Xiaoqiao Zou as alternate rapporteur, both for a period of one year, until 31 December 2014.

Chapter V

Activities carried out under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

26. Article 12 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women provides that the Committee shall include in its annual report a summary of its activities carried out under the Optional Protocol.

A. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 2 of the Optional Protocol

27. The Committee discussed activities under the Optional Protocol on 11, 14 and 18 October 2013.

28. The Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its twenty-seventh session (see annex IX to part two of the present report).

29. The Committee adopted final decisions with regard to two individual communications submitted under article 2 of the Optional Protocol. The Committee adopted inadmissibility decisions on communications No. 29/2011 (*M.S. v. Spain*) and No. 44/2012 (*M.A.A. v. Denmark*), by consensus. The decisions are available through the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/) under the symbols CEDAW/C/56/D/29/2011 and CEDAW/C/56/D/44/2012, respectively.

B. Follow-up to views of the Committee on individual communications

30. No follow-up progress report was prepared during the reporting period. However, the Committee was informed that during its twenty-seventh session, the Working Group had discussed the follow-up situation in each case where the follow-up dialogue was ongoing and that it had agreed on the action to be taken. The Working Group thus requested to have meetings arranged with the Permanent Missions of Brazil and the Philippines to discuss follow-up matters. The Committee did not take a decision to put the follow-up dialogue to an end in any of the cases currently under follow-up examination. Of the nine cases that are currently under follow-up examination, one relates to Belarus, one to Brazil, three to Bulgaria,[2] one to Canada, one to Peru, one to the Philippines and one to Turkey.

[2] The Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol held a meeting with the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the United Nations Office at Geneva and discussed follow-up matters regarding the measures taken to give effect to the Committee's views in three cases. The meeting was qualified as encouraging by the Working Group members present. The State party was requested to provide updated information regarding the three cases under follow-up examination. The State party's representatives informed the Working Group on important developments regarding the creation of a national coordinating body empowered, inter alia, to deal with individual communications submitted to treaty bodies, in particular with regard to follow-up to the views of treaty bodies on individual communications.

C. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 8 of the Optional Protocol

31. The Committee was briefed on the status of all pending submissions and proceedings under the inquiry procedure.

32. In relation to inquiry No. 2010/1, the experts designated to conduct the inquiry held a meeting with the Permanent Representative of the State party concerned.

33. The Committee was briefed by the experts designated to conduct inquiry No. 2011/1 on the visit they had undertaken to the territory of the State party concerned.

34. In relation to submissions Nos. 2011/2 and 2013/1, the Committee decided to request the States parties concerned to submit observations with regard to the information received by the Committee under article 8 of the Optional Protocol.

35. The Committee received one additional submission under article 8 of the Optional Protocol, which was registered as submission No. 2013/2.

Chapter VI
Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

36. During its fifty-sixth session, the Committee considered agenda item 7, on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.

Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 7

Enhancing the working methods of the Committee

37. The secretariat informed the Committee about the status of the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system (General Assembly resolution 66/254), in particular the report of the co-facilitators of the open-ended intergovernmental process on how to strengthen and enhance the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system (A/67/995) and by General Assembly resolution 68/2, extending the intergovernmental process until the first half of February 2014 and requesting the Secretary-General to provide, by 15 November 2013, a comprehensive and detailed cost assessment based on, but not limited to, the report of the co-facilitators.

38. On 14 October 2013, the Chair, Nicole Ameline, briefed the Committee about her presentation of the report of the Committee on its fifty-second, fifty-third and fifty-fourth sessions to the Third Committee of the General Assembly in New York, on 11 October 2013.

Dates of future sessions of the Committee

39. In accordance with the calendar of conferences, the following dates were confirmed for the Committee's fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth sessions and related meetings:

Fifty-seventh session (Geneva)

(a) Twenty-eighth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 4 to 7 February 2014;

(b) Fifty-seventh session: 10 to 28 February 2014;

(c) Pre-session working group for the fifty-ninth session: 3 to 7 March 2014;

Fifty-eighth session (Geneva)

(d) Twenty-ninth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 25 to 27 June 2014;

(e) Fifty-eighth session: 30 June to 18 July 2014;

(f) Pre-session working group for the sixtieth session: 21 to 25 July 2014.

Reports to be considered at future sessions of the Committee

40. The Committee confirmed that it would consider the reports of the States parties listed below at its fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth sessions.

Fifty-seventh session:

Bahrain

Cameroon

Finland

Iraq

Kazakhstan

Qatar

Sierra Leone

It is noted that the consideration of Senegal in the absence of a report was also scheduled for the fifty-seventh session. Senegal submitted its combined third to seventh periodic report on 31 July 2013 and the consideration was subsequently postponed to the sixty-first session to allow for the translation of the report and the establishment of the list of issues at the pre-session working group.

Fifty-eighth session:

Central African Republic

Georgia

India

Lithuania

Mauritania

Peru

Swaziland

Syrian Arab Republic

It is noted that the consideration of the Central African Republic in the absence of a report had originally been scheduled for the fifty-third session. However, it submitted its combined initial to fifth periodic reports on 26 June 2012, and the consideration was subsequently postponed to the fifty-eighth session to allow for the translation of the report and the establishment of a new and/or updated list of issues at the pre-session working group.

Chapter VII
Implementation of article 21 of the Convention

41. During the fifty-sixth session, the Committee considered agenda item 6, on the implementation of article 21 of the Convention.

Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 6

Joint general recommendation/comment on harmful practices

42. The working group met during the session. On 6 October 2013, the joint working group of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child held an informal meeting, with a view to finalizing the draft general recommendation/comment on harmful practices.

General recommendation on women in conflict and post-conflict situations

43. The working group met during the session.

44. On 18 October 2013, the Committee adopted general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations[3] unanimously by roll-call vote,[4] in accordance with rules 31, paragraph 2, 32, paragraph 2, and 34 of the rules of procedure of the Committee. One member[5] submitted a statement explaining her vote (see annex II to part two of the present report).

45. In accordance with rules 31, paragraph 2, 34 and 37 of the rules of procedure of the Committee, an amendment to paragraph 57 (b) of general recommendation No. 30 was voted upon by roll-call, as no consensus could be reached. Of the 19 members present, 15[6] voted in favour of "including [...] girls, [...] women who head households, pregnant women, women living with HIV/AIDS, [...] indigenous women and women belonging to ethnic, national, sexual or religious minorities, and women human rights defenders" in the list of groups of internally displaced and refugee women subjected to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 3[7] members voted against and 1[8] member abstained; 3[9] members submitted statements explaining their vote (see annexes III, IV and V to part two of the present report).

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[3] The text of general recommendation No. 30 is available from the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org) under the symbol CEDAW/C/GC/30.

[4] Of the 18 members present, 16 voted in favour (Noor Al-Jehani, Nicole Ameline, Barbara Bailey, Olinda Bareiro Bobadilla, Hilary Gbedemah, Nahla Haidar, Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Yoko Hayashi, Dalia Leinarte, Violeta Neubauer, Theodora Oby Nwankwo, Pramila Patten, Silvia Pimentel, Maria Helena Pires, Biancamaria Pomeranzi and Patricia Schulz) and 2 members abstained (Naela Gabr and Ismat Jahan). In accordance with rule 32, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure of the Committee, the 2 members who abstained from voting are considered as not voting.

[5] Naela Gabr.

[6] Nicole Ameline, Barbara Bailey, Olinda Bareiro Bobadilla, Hilary Gbedemah, Nahla Haidar, Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Yoko Hayashi, Dalia Leinarte, Violeta Neubauer, Theodora Oby Nwankwo, Pramila Patten, Silvia Pimentel, Maria Helena Pires, Biancamaria Pomeranzi and Patricia Schulz.

[7] Noor Al-Jehani, Naela Gabr and Ismat Jahan.

[8] Xiaoqiao Zou.

[9] Noor Al-Jehani, Naela Gabr and Ismat Jahan.

46. Paragraph 57 (b), as amended, was adopted in accordance with rules 31, paragraph 2, and 37 of the rules of procedure of the Committee. Of the 19 members present, 15 voted in favour, 3 voted against and 1 member abstained.

General recommendation on access to justice

47. The working group met during the session.

Working group on gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum and statelessness

48. The working group met during the session. On 11 October 2013, the Committee discussed the draft general recommendation on gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum and statelessness, in the presence of two UNHCR representatives.

Working group on rural women

49. The working group met during the session.

50. On 7 October 2013, the Committee held a half-day of general discussion on rural women, as part of the first phase in the elaboration of a general recommendation on the subject. The discussion was opened by the Chair, Nicole Ameline, followed by opening addresses by Elisabeth Rasmusson, Assistant Executive Director for Partnerships and Governance, World Food Programme (also representing FAO, IFAD and UN-Women as co-organizers) and Ibrahim Salama, Director, Human Rights Treaties Division, OHCHR. The future general recommendation on rural women was introduced by the chair of the Committee's working group on rural women, Naela Gabr. The following five keynote speakers explored the legal, socioeconomic and other challenges facing the full realization of rural women's rights: Emna Aouij, member of the working group on discrimination against women in law and practice; Olivier de Schutter, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Catarina de Albuquerque, Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation; Mayra Gomez, co-executive director, The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and Violet Shivutse, representing the grass-roots organization Groots, Kenya. After the interventions of the keynote speakers, oral statements were made by the following States parties: Australia, Spain, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, Syrian Arab Republic and Thailand. Further statements were made by four United Nations entities and specialized agencies: FAO, IFAD, ILO and UNAIDS and by nine civil society organizations (Arundhati Bhattacharyya India, Asociación Colectivo Mujeres al Derecho Colombia, CARE International, Center for Reproductive Rights, Centro de investigación y educación popular de Colombia, FIAN, International Disability Alliance, Landesa, and Soroptimist International). The representatives of 30 States parties attended the general discussion: Algeria, Australia, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Croatia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Guatemala, Holy See, Indonesia, Israel, Panama, Paraguay, Rwanda, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

Working group on gender equality in the context of climate change and natural disasters

51. The working group met during the session.

Working group on the right to education

52. The working group met during the session.

Working group on working methods

53. The working group met during the session.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/ Inter-Parliamentary Union Working Group

54. The working group met during the session. On 7 October 2013, the Committee held a meeting with a high-level IPU delegation of parliamentarians, in closed meeting, to discuss possible ways of cooperation between the Committee and national parliamentarians.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/UN-Women working group

55. The working group met during the session.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/Human Rights Committee working group

56. The working group met during the session.

Focal points on sexual and reproductive rights

57. The focal point and alternate focal points met during the session.

Chapter VIII
Provisional agenda for the fifty-seventh session

58. On 18 October 2013 the Committee considered the draft provisional agenda for its fifty-seventh session and approved the following provisional agenda for that session:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Report of the Chair on activities undertaken between the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions of the Committee.
4. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
5. Follow-up to concluding observations of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Implementation of articles 21 and 22 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
7. Activities of the Committee under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
8. Provisional agenda for the fifty-eighth session of the Committee.
9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-seventh session.

Chapter IX
Adoption of the report

59. The Committee considered the draft report on its fifty-sixth session and addenda on 18 October 2013 and adopted the text as orally revised during the discussion.

Annex I

Decision 56/IV
Decision of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the continuation of webcasting

Adopted on 18 October 2013

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recalls the decision taken at its fifty-fourth session, providing for public webcasting of its dialogues with States parties during a trial period covering its fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions and for an assessment to be made at the fifty-sixth session in order to determine whether or not to continue such webcasting.

The Committee notes that International Women's Rights Action Watch-Asia Pacific has provided webcasting of the public meetings of the Committee free of charge on the website of the NGO coalition UN Treaty Body Webcast (www.treatybodywebcast.org), live as well as archived.

It expresses its gratitude for the services provided by International Women's Rights Action Watch-Asia Pacific and the NGO Coalition and acknowledges the resources invested by them in providing such services.

It also expresses the hope that in the near future it will be possible to provide webcasting with captioning.

It considers that webcasting of its public meetings:

- Increases the visibility and promotes awareness of the Convention and the work of the Committee
- Increases the transparency of the Committee's proceedings, enables State parties and NGOs to prepare in advance for their interaction with the Committee, without having to travel to the Committee's sessions prior to such interaction
- Strengthens the accountability of reporting and promotes the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee
- Has not impacted negatively on the work of the Committee or on its constructive dialogues with States parties

Decision

The Committee decided to continue the practice of publicly webcasting its dialogues with States parties and other public meetings beyond the trial period stipulated in decision 54/7 for an indefinite period until such time as it may decide otherwise.

18 October 2013

Annex II

Explanation of vote by Naela Gabr following the vote on general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations

"I abstained because parts of the General Recommendation did not reflect the priorities needed by some groups of disadvantaged women (rural, indigenous and older women)."

18 October 2013

Annex III

Explanation of vote by Noor Al-Jehani following the vote on the amendment to paragraph 57 (b) of general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations

"I voted against this paragraph because I am concerned that the Committee is weakening its jurisprudence when it adopts long incomprehensible lists that in the end remove the attention from the very vulnerable groups of women it aims to protect."

18 October 2013

Annex IV

Explanation of vote by Naela Gabr following the vote on the amendment to paragraph 57 (b) of general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations

"I have voted against a long list after the word 'including' because it is diluting the attention from the main affected groups of women subject to displacement. For this reason, I have supported the original proposal: 'Address the specific risks and particular needs of different groups of internally displaced and refugee women, subjected to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as rural women, older women, widows and women with disabilities.'"

18 October 2013

Annex V

Explanation of vote by Ismat Jahan following the vote on the amendment to paragraph 57 (b) of general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations

It is with deep sadness that I had to take a position against part of the amendments, given that I was earlier associated with the draft general recommendation, as a member of the Working Group.

I found part of the amendments put forth at a late stage counterproductive to the very objective of the subparagraph in its original form, when it had sought to ask for particular focus on the specific needs of a vast majority of women, who require special attention, in terms of extent, magnitude and enormity of the challenges they face as refugee and displaced women.

The amendments weaken and dilute the focus on them. I was therefore constrained to vote against.

I would like my explanation to be recorded in the Committee's report and ask for a footnote to the said paragraph of the general recommendation, stating that it was adopted by vote.

I thank you.

18 October 2013

Annex VI

Assessment of the procedure on follow-up to concluding observations

Assessment of the follow-up procedure under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Follow-up procedure to concluding observations

At its forty-first session, held in July 2008, the Committee decided to introduce a follow-up procedure whereby the State party is requested to follow up on recommendations identified by the Committee as follow-up items. The request, based on article 18, paragraph 1 (b), of the Convention, would call on States parties to provide such information to the Committee within one or two years, depending on the urgency of the situation.

During its forty-fourth session, held in July-August 2009, the Committee decided that a maximum of two recommendations would be identified as follow-up items for each State party and that the response by the State party would be made public. At its fifty-third session, the Committee agreed with the proposal of the Rapporteur on follow-up only to select a limited number of subparagraphs as follow-up items, when the recommendations concerned are too long.

At its forty-fifth session, held in January-February 2010, the Committee decided on the methodology to assess States parties reports received under the follow-up procedure. It reviewed the follow-up methodology at its fifty-fourth session in February 2013.

The criterion for the selection of recommendations as follow-up items is as follows: the issues selected for short-term action constitute a major obstacle to women's enjoyment of their human rights and would therefore constitute a major obstacle for the implementation of the Convention as a whole.

Once it has received the follow-up report, the Committee assesses, based on the recommendation of the respective country rapporteur or other members of the Committee, the responses received to determine whether or not the issues designated by the Committee for follow-up have been adequately addressed by the State party concerned and/or whether further information is required based on the following categories: "Implemented"; "Partially Implemented"; "Not Implemented"; and "Lack of sufficient information received to make an assessment".

The Committee's assessment is based on the preliminary assessment provided by the Rapporteur on follow-up, the alternate rapporteur and the Committee member who acted as country rapporteur when the State party presented its periodic report. In the absence of the country rapporteur, another member is asked to volunteer.

Thereafter, the Rapporteur on follow-up transmits the Committee's assessment in writing to the State party concerned. In the letter, the Committee requests that the State party provide, within one year or, alternatively, in the next periodic report, additional information on further action taken to implement those recommendations which have been partially or not implemented, and/or on which it failed to provide sufficient information.

During its fifty-fourth session, held in February 2013, the Committee adopted guidelines to provide information to States parties, NGOs and national human rights institutions on the modalities of the submission of follow-up reports and information. The issuance of these guidelines resulted in the submission by States parties of more concise and focused follow-up reports, which have facilitated the assessment of the implementation of the relevant recommendations and resulted in a reduction of editing and translation costs.

Reminders in the absence of a response

In the absence of a response from the State party, the Rapporteur transmits a first reminder after two months of the information being overdue and a second reminder after four months if the information remains overdue. If information is not received within six months, the Rapporteur requests a meeting with the Permanent Mission of the State party concerned in order to sustain the dialogue on the items identified in the follow-up paragraphs.

Rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations and alternate rapporteur

At its forty-fourth session, held in July-August 2009, the Committee decided to appoint a Rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations and an alternate rapporteur, Dubravka Šimonović and Barbara Bailey, respectively, and also defined their mandate.

At its forty-sixth session in July 2010, the Committee decided to extend the mandate of the Rapporteur and her alternate until 31 December 2010. The Committee further agreed that both their mandates will be extended for a two-year term ending on 31 December 2012, and that the mandate of the Rapporteur and his or her alternate will be of two years' duration. In October 2011, Ms. Šimonović decided to resign as Rapporteur on follow-up with effect from 31 December 2011, and the Committee appointed Ms. Bailey as Rapporteur and Ms. Hayashi as alternate.

Reporting

At each session of the Committee, the Rapporteur on follow-up reports on the action taken or proposed. In addition, the Committee includes information on its follow-up activities in its annual report to the General Assembly.

Transparency

All follow-up reports and the Committee's assessment letters, as well as NGO follow-up reports which are not confidential, are posted on the Committee's public OHCHR website.

Assessment

The Committee assessed the experience of its follow-up procedure at its fiftieth session, in October 2011. It decided that the follow-up procedure in relation to the implementation of Concluding Observations should continue and that another assessment should be made in October 2013.

The following assessment covers the period from the beginning of the follow-up procedure (forty-first session) until the end of the fifty-fifth session):

1. Submission of follow-up reports

- Since the inception of the follow-up procedure, 73 reports have been requested between the forty-first and forty-ninth sessions, which were due between the forty-seventh and fifty-fifth sessions, respectively
- 45 of the 73 requested reports (62 per cent) have been received
- NGOs sent alternative follow-up information in relation to 13 (29 per cent) of the 45 reports received under the follow-up procedure; one national human rights institution submitted follow-up information
- Of the 45 follow-up reports received, 9 (20 per cent) were received on time, 13 (29 per cent) were received with less than a six-month delay, 15 (33 per cent) with a six-month to one-year delay, and 8 (17 per cent) with a one-year to two-year delay
- The Committee examined 41 of the 45 (91 per cent) follow-up reports received to assess whether the recommendations had been implemented. The remaining four reports were not examined because they were still in the process of being translated
- Finally, only considering the reports for which the follow-up cycle has been fully completed (this covers all requests for follow-up information made between the forty-first through the forty-fourth session), it can be observed that 29 of the 38 reports (76 per cent) requested during this period have been received

2. Status of implementation of recommendations

With regard to the extent to which the recommendations of the Committee are implemented by the States parties, the Committee considered that:

- 19 per cent of the recommendations identified as follow-up items had been implemented
- 41 per cent had been partially implemented
- 29 per cent had not been implemented
- In 11 per cent of the cases, the Committee considered that it had not received sufficient information to make an assessment

The workload of the follow-up procedure is significant. On average, assessments of seven follow-up reports were made per session by the Rapporteur on follow-up and the alternate Rapporteur, in addition to sending seven first reminders, five second reminders, two invitations for a meeting, and 1 second invitation for a meeting.

The information contained in the follow-up reports received suggests that the follow-up procedure is serving its stated purpose as a tool of implementation of the Convention and, more specifically, of the identified recommendations set out in the relevant concluding observations. This procedure has therefore proved to be an

effective reporting mechanism under article 18 of the Convention that enables the Committee to monitor progress achieved between reporting cycles.

Recommendations

The following recommendations of the previous assessment should be retained:

1. The follow-up procedure under article 18 of the Convention in relation to the implementation of concluding observations should be continued;

2. The two-year mandate of the Rapporteur on follow-up and the alternate Rapporteur should be retained, and all Committee members should rotate and participate in follow-up assessments. In addition, there should ideally be a one-year overlap of the mandates of the Rapporteur on follow-up and the alternate Rapporteur in order to ensure the continuity and consistency of the assessments made by the Committee;

3. The Committee should retain the new methodology for follow-up, which uses the categories "implemented", "partially implemented", "not implemented" and "lack of sufficient information" in the assessment of the follow-up reports;

4. The Committee should retain the guidelines for States parties, non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions regarding the submission of follow-up reports and information;

5. A country-specific follow-up approach should be applied for States parties in conflict or post-conflict situations;

6. In addition to retaining a separate agenda item on follow-up for each session, additional time should be allocated to this item during the Committee's sessions, and one staff member of the Secretariat should be specifically assigned to ensure timely support to the Rapporteur on follow-up and alternate Rapporteur both during and between sessions;

7. The next evaluation of the follow-up procedure should be carried out and tabled at the sixty-fifth session, in October 2016.

Annex VII

Documents before the Committee at its fifty-sixth session

Document number	*Title or description*
CEDAW/C/56/1	Provisional agenda and annotations
CEDAW/C/56/2	Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Reports of States parties	
CEDAW/C/AND/2-3	Combined second and third periodic reports of Andorra
CEDAW/C/BEN/4	Fourth periodic report of Benin
CEDAW/C/KHM/4-5	Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Cambodia
CEDAW/C/COL/7-8	Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Colombia
CEDAW/C/MDA/4-5	Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the Republic of Moldova
CEDAW/C/SYC/1-5	Combined initial to fifth periodic reports of Seychelles
CEDAW/C/TJK/4-5	Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Tajikistan

Annex VIII

Membership of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as at 18 October 2013

Name of member	*Country of nationality*	*Term of office expires on 31 December*
Ayse Feride Acar	Turkey	2014
Noor Al-Jehani	Qatar	2016
Nicole Ameline	France	2016
Barbara Evelyn Bailey	Jamaica	2016
Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla	Paraguay	2014
Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani	Algeria	2014
Niklas Bruun	Finland	2016
Naela Mohamed Gabr	Egypt	2014
Hilary Gbedemah	Ghana	2016
Nahla Haidar	Lebanon	2016
Ruth Halperin-Kaddari	Israel	2014
Yoko Hayashi	Japan	2014
Ismat Jahan	Bangladesh	2014
Dalia Leinarte	Lithuania	2016
Violeta Neubauer	Slovenia	2014
Theodora Oby Nwankwo	Nigeria	2016
Pramila Patten	Mauritius	2014
Silvia Pimentel	Brazil	2016
Maria Helena Lopes de Jesus Pires	Timor-Leste	2014
Biancamaria Pomeranzi	Italy	2016
Patricia Schulz	Switzerland	2014
Dubravka Šimonović	Croatia	2014
Xiaoqiao Zou	China	2016

Annex IX

Report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on its twenty-seventh session

1. The Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women held its twenty-seventh session from 24 to 27 September 2013 in Geneva. All members attended the session (Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla, Niklas Bruun, Yoko Hayashi, Pramila Patten and Dubravka Šimonović).

2. At the beginning of the session, the Working Group adopted its agenda as set out in the appendix to the present report.

3. The Working Group then reviewed an update prepared by the Secretariat on eight new pieces of correspondence received between 28 June 2013 and 20 September 2013.

4. The Working Group decided to appoint Ms. Šimonović as case rapporteur for communication No. 61/2013 regarding Denmark, registered intersessionally. It then decided to register two new communications, one regarding Argentina (No. 62/2013) and one regarding Denmark (No. 63/2013). In relation to communication No. 62/2013, the Working Group appointed Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla as case rapporteur and decided to transmit the correspondence to the State party. In relation to communication No. 63/2013, the Working Group appointed Mr. Bruun as case rapporteur and agreed to decide on the issue of interim measures during the Committee's fifty-sixth session before transmitting the correspondence to the State party.

5. With respect to correspondence which had not been registered, the Working Group took note that the Secretariat had requested the author for clarifications in a communication regarding Italy, and was waiting for her reply. With regard to two pieces of correspondence regarding Argentina and France, the Working Group decided not to register the cases. It also rejected a case regarding India, which is not a State party to the Optional Protocol.

6. The Working Group also discussed four draft recommendations. It adopted draft inadmissibility recommendations regarding communications No. 29/2011 concerning Spain and No. 39/2012 concerning the Netherlands, both adopted by consensus. It also adopted a draft inadmissibility/admissibility recommendation regarding communication No. 44/2012 concerning Denmark. It should be noted that in relation to the latter, the Working Group had a discussion regarding the "victim" status of male children as authors in Optional Protocol cases. All three recommendations will be referred to the plenary meeting at the Committee's fifty-sixth session.

7. The Working Group also discussed draft views on communication No. 41/2012 concerning Ecuador, and decided to submit a request for clarifications and additional information to both parties to the proceedings in order to be able to take a fully reasoned decision.

8. During the session, all Working Group members proceeded to an inventory of all case files for the communications in which they are case rapporteurs. The Working Group then reviewed the status of all pending communications registered under the Optional Protocol and had a discussion on each of them. At the end of the twenty-seventh session of the Working Group, there were 29 pending cases, out of which three were adopted by the Working Group at its twenty-seventh session and will be sent to the plenary Committee.

9. The Working Group further decided to grant requests by the State party for the Committee to decide on the admissibility separately from the merits (so-called split requests) in relation to two communications concerning Denmark (Nos. 50/2013 and 56/2013).

10. The Working Group then requested the secretariat to prepare, on a priority basis, draft recommendations for the next session, in the light of the above-mentioned discussions. Thus, for its twenty-eighth session in February 2014, the Working Group requested the secretariat to prepare three or, possibly, four draft recommendations, including those on communications Nos. 34/2011, 36/2012 and 37/2012 (in the latter two cases, split requests were granted in October 2012).

11. The Working Group discussed the follow-up situation in each case where the follow-up dialogue is ongoing and agreed on the possible action to be taken, to be brought to the attention of the Committee. The Working Group was also briefed by the secretariat of a meeting that Yoko Hayashi, Dubravka Šimonović and Niklas Bruun had on 26 September 2013 with representatives of Bulgaria (one representative of the Permanent Mission of the State party to the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Head of the Human Rights Unit, Human Rights Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria), in accordance with the Committee's request.[a]

12. The Working Group decided to arrange for meetings during the Committee's fifty-sixth session with the Permanent Missions of Brazil and of the Philippines to discuss follow-up matters. The secretariat was requested to share with the Working Group the methodology used by other treaty bodies in assessing the follow-up situation of cases and the manner in which such assessments are reflected in their annual reports.

[a] The Committee members noted that to date, the Committee's recommendations in relation to two cases concerning Bulgaria (Nos. 20/2008 and 31/2011) had not been fully implemented, and that the follow-up reply in relation to a third case (No. 32/2011) was overdue. The State party's representatives provided information on ongoing institutional reforms and developments regarding the three cases under follow-up examination by the Committee, including consideration of payment of compensation. The meeting was qualified as encouraging by the Working Group members present. The State party was asked to provide updated information regarding the three cases, including information on the National Coordinating Mechanism (regarding individual complaints), prior to the twenty-eighth session of the Working Group.

Action taken at the present session

13. The Working Group decided:

(a) To refer for adoption to the Committee a recommendation supported by all members of the Working Group in relation to the inadmissibility of communication No. 29/2011 concerning Spain;

(b) To refer for adoption to the Committee a recommendation supported by all members of the Working Group in relation to the inadmissibility of communication No. 39/2012 concerning the Netherlands;

(c) To refer for adoption to the Committee a recommendation in relation to communication No. 44/2012 concerning Denmark, with two options (admissibility-inadmissibility);

(d) To discontinue, at the State party's request and with the author's consent, the consideration of communication No. 42/2012 concerning the Netherlands.

(e) To request the secretariat to prepare draft recommendations for the twenty-eighth session of the Working Group regarding communications No. 34/2012 concerning the Philippines, No. 36/2012 concerning the Netherlands, and No. 37/2011 concerning Denmark;

(f) To accede to the State party's split requests in relation to communications Nos. 50/2013 and 56/2013, both concerning Denmark;

(g) To seek further information from the parties to the proceedings in relation to communication No. 41/2012 concerning Ecuador;

(h) To appoint Dubravka Šimonović as case rapporteur for communication No. 61/2013 concerning Denmark;

(i) To register one new communication concerning Argentina as communication No. 62/2013 and to appoint Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla as case rapporteur;

(j) To register a new communication concerning Denmark as communication No. 63/2013 and to appoint Niklas Bruun as case rapporteur;

(k) To request the secretariat to continue uploading on the Optional Protocol extranet, the academic resources that were cited in the note by the secretariat and to make available copies of excerpts, as requested;

(l) To request the secretariat to prepare information on the follow-up procedure, including summaries of the submissions by the parties to the relevant proceedings;

(m) To request the secretariat to arrange for a meeting with the representatives of the Permanent Missions of Brazil and of the Philippines to the United Nations Office at Geneva to discuss follow-up on individual cases.

14. The Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women decided to hold its twenty-eighth session from 4 to 7 February 2014 in Geneva.

Appendix

Agenda of the twenty-seventh session of the Working Group

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Review of steps and activities undertaken since the last session.
3. New communications registered and appointment of case rapporteurs.
4. Discussion on cases ready for adoption.
5. Discontinuances.
6. Update on communications (registered cases).
7. Update on follow-up on views.
8. Discussion regarding cases ready for adoption and prioritization.
9. Adoption of the report of the Working Group on its twenty-seventh session

Part Three
Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its fifty-seventh session

10-28 February 2014

Chapter I

Matters brought to the attention of the States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Decisions

Decision 57/I

On 26 February 2014, the Committee adopted a statement on the post-2015 development agenda and the elimination of discrimination against women. (See annex I to part three of the present report.)

Decision 57/II

On 26 February 2014, the Committee adopted a statement on sexual and reproductive health and rights. (See annex II to part three of the present report.)

Decision 57/III

On 28 February 2014, the Committee decided to entrust the working group on working methods with the task of reviewing, with support from the Secretariat, the rules of procedure of the Committee, with a view to proposing amendments, as and when required, in order to incorporate into the rules of procedure (a) recent decisions of the Committee on its methods of work; (b) new provisions operationalizing the Addis Ababa guidelines on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies (the "Addis Ababa guidelines") (A/67/222, annex I); and (c) integrating the outcome of the intergovernmental process on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system (General Assembly resolution 68/268).

Decision 57/IV

The Committee confirmed the members of the pre-session working group for the fifty-ninth session, i.e., Feride Acar, Barbara Bailey, Ismat Jahan, Dalia Leinarte and Pramila Patten.

Decision 57/V

On 28 February 2014, the Committee decided to request the High Commissioner for Human Rights to designate the Petitions and Inquiries Section to service the work of the Committee under article 8 of the Optional Protocol (inquiry procedure) and to provide the Petitions and Inquiries Section with the necessary additional human and financial resources. (See annex III to part three of the present report.)

Decision 57/VI

The Committee designated Niklas Bruun as Chair and Nahla Haidar as Vice-Chair of the task force on inquiries and decided to expand the task force to include Naela Gabr, in addition to the existing members Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla, Niklas Bruun (Chair), Barbara Bailey, Nahla Haidar (Vice-Chair), Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Violeta Neubauer, Pramila Patten, Patricia Schulz, and Dubravka Šimonović.

Decision 57/VII

The Committee decided to establish a task force on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, chaired by Ms. Patten and additionally composed of Ms. Ameline, Ms. Bareiro-Bobadilla, Mr. Bruun, Ms. Haidar, Ms. Jahan, Ms. Nwanko, Ms. Pires and Ms. Pomeranzi.

Decision 57/VIII

The working group on gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum and statelessness was expanded to include Nahla Haidar, in addition to the existing members Feride Acar, Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani, Niklas Bruun, Yoko Hayashi, Ismat Jahan, Patricia Schulz and Dubravka Šimonović (Chair).

Chapter II
Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention and to the Optional Protocol

1. On 28 February 2014, the closing date of the fifty-seventh session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were 187 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[1] which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York on 1 March 1980. In accordance with its article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981. In addition, 68 States parties had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, concerning the Committee's meeting time. A total of 125 States parties to the Convention are currently required to accept the amendment in order to bring it into force, in accordance with its provisions.

2. As at the same date, there were 104 States parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention,[2] which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/4 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York on 10 December 1999. In accordance with its article 16, the Optional Protocol entered into force on 22 December 2000.

3. Updated information on the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and its Optional Protocol, and lists of States signatories and parties and the texts of declarations, reservations, objections and other relevant information, is available from the website of the United Nations Treaty Collection (http://treaties.un.org), which is maintained by the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs, which discharges the depositary functions of the Secretary-General.

B. Opening of the session

4. The Committee held its fifty-fourth session at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 10 to 28 February 2014. The Committee held 17 plenary meetings and also held 13 meetings to discuss agenda items 5, 6, 7 and 8. A list of the documents before the Committee is contained in annex IV to part three of the present report.

5. The session was opened by the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Pramila Patten, on 10 February 2014, at its 1185th meeting.

C. Adoption of the agenda

6. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda (CEDAW/C/57/1) at its 1185th meeting.

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[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[2] Ibid., vol. 2131, No. 20378.

D. Report of the pre-session working group

7. The report of the pre-session working group (CEDAW/PSWG/57/1), which met from 29 July to 2 August 2014, was introduced by Pramila Patten at the 1185th meeting.

E. Organization of work

8. On 10 and 17 February 2014, the Committee held a closed meeting with representatives of the specialized agencies, Funds and Programmes of the United Nations system, and other intergovernmental organizations, during which those bodies provided country-specific information and information on the efforts they had made to support the implementation of the Convention.

9. On 10 and 17 February 2014, the Committee held informal public meetings with representatives of non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions, who provided information about the implementation of the Convention in the States parties considered by the Committee at its fifty-seventh session.

10. On 17 February 2014, the Committee was briefed by representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) on the revised WHO technical and policy guidance on safe abortion.

11. On 27 February 2014, the Committee met with the Chief of the OHCHR Women's Rights and Gender Section, Veronica Birga, who briefed the Committee on women's rights in the strategic planning of OHCHR for the period from 2014 to 2017 and on an ongoing study on gender stereotyping.

F. Membership of the Committee

12. All members attended the fifty-seventh session, with the exception of Noor Al-Jehani and Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani. Feride Acar did not attend the session from 10 to 11 February 2014. Nicole Ameline was not able to attend the session from 10 to 11 and on 17 February 2014. Niklas Bruun did not attend the session on 13 February 2014. Ruth Halperin Kaddari did not attend the session from 10 to 14 and on 21 and 28 February 2014. A list of members of the Committee, indicating the duration of their terms of office, is contained in annex VIII to part two of the present report.

Chapter III

Report of the Chair on activities carried out between the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions of the Committee

13. At the 1185th meeting, the Vice-Chair, Pramila Patten, presented the report of the Chair, Nicole Ameline, on the activities that the Chair had undertaken since the fifty-sixth session of the Committee.

Chapter IV

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

14. At its fifty-seventh session, the Committee considered the reports of seven States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention: the third periodic report of Bahrain; the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Cameroon; the seventh periodic report of Finland; the combined fourth, fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq; the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Kazakhstan; the initial report of Qatar; and the sixth periodic report of Sierra Leone.

15. The Committee adopted concluding observations on each of the reports considered. The concluding observations are available from the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/) under the symbols indicated below:

Bahrain	(CEDAW/C/BHR/CO/3)
Cameroon	(CEDAW/C/CMR/CO/4-5)
Finland	(CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7)
Iraq	(CEDAW/C/IRQ/CO/4-6)
Kazakhstan	(CEDAW/C/KAZ/CO/3-4)
Qatar	(CEDAW/C/QAT/CO/1)
Sierra Leone	(CEDAW/C/SLE/CO/6)

16. It is noted that the consideration of Senegal in the absence of a report was also scheduled for the fifty-seventh session. However, Senegal submitted its combined third to seventh periodic reports on 31 July 2013, and the consideration was subsequently postponed to the sixty-first session in order to allow for the translation of the report and the establishment of an updated list of issues at the pre-session working group.

Follow-up procedures relating to concluding observations

17. The Committee considered the follow-up reports from the following States parties:

Bangladesh	(CEDAW/C/BGD/CO/7/Add.1)
Italy	(CEDAW/C/ITA/CO/6/Add.1)
Lesotho	(CEDAW/C/LSO/CO/1-4/Add.1)
Sri Lanka	(CEDAW/C/LKA/CO/7/Add.1)

18. The Committee also considered additional information sent by Myanmar (CEDAW/C/MMR/CO/3/Add.4).

19. The Committee sent first reminders to the following States parties whose follow-up reports were overdue: Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Kuwait, Montenegro and Oman.

20. The Committee sent second reminders to the following States parties whose follow-up reports were overdue: Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malta, South Africa and Uganda.

21. The Committee sent a reminder to the United Republic of Tanzania regarding the submission of additional information which was overdue.

22. The Rapporteur on follow-up and her alternate met with representatives of Libya whose follow-up report was overdue.

Chapter V

Activities carried out under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

23. Article 12 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention provides that the Committee shall include in its annual report, under article 21 of the Convention, a summary of its activities under the Optional Protocol.

A. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 2 of the Optional Protocol

24. The Committee discussed activities under article 2 of the Optional Protocol on 17 and 24 February 2014. It endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol regarding its twenty-eighth session (see annex IV).

25. The Committee adopted final decisions with regard to three individual communications submitted under article 2 of the Optional Protocol. The Committee adopted views finding violations on communications No. 34/2011 (*R.P.B. v. the Philippines*) and No. 36/2012 (*De Blok et al. v. the Netherlands*) as well as an inadmissibility decision on communication No. 39/2012 (*N. v. the Netherlands*). All decisions were adopted by consensus. The Committee also decided to discontinue its consideration of one communication (No. 41/2012) regarding Ecuador. The text of the views and the decision are available through the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/) under the symbols CEDAW/C/57/D/34/2011, CEDAW/C/57/D/36/2012 and CEDAW/C/57/D/39/2012, respectively.

B. Follow-up to views of the Committee on individual communications

26. No follow-up progress report was prepared during the reporting period, but the Committee was informed that the Working Group, during its twenty-eighth session, had discussed the follow-up situation in each case where the follow-up dialogue is ongoing and that it had agreed on the action to be taken. The Committee did not take a decision to put the follow-up dialogue to an end in any of the cases currently under follow-up examination. Of the 11 cases that are currently under follow-up examination, 1 relates to Belarus, 1 to Brazil, 3 to Bulgaria, 1 to Canada, 1 to Peru, 1 to the Philippines, 1 to Turkey;[1] and in the two cases adopted at the fifty-seventh session in which the Committee found violations (one concerning the Philippines

[1] The Chair of the Committee's Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol, Yoko Hayashi, and Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla held two meetings to discuss follow-up matters on individual communications with the Permanent Representatives of Brazil and Belarus to the United Nations Office at Geneva on 21 and 28 February 2014, respectively, during the Committee's fifty-seventh session. During the meetings, the Permanent Representatives provided the Committee members with updated information regarding recent positive steps to give effect to the recommendations contained in the Committee's Views on communications No. 17/2008 (*Maria da Lourdes da Silva Pimentel v. Brazil*) and No. 23/2011 (*Inga Abramova v. Belarus*), respectively.

and 1 concerning the Netherlands), the States parties were given six months to provide their follow-up replies.

C. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising under article 8 of the Optional Protocol

27. The Committee was briefed on the status of all pending submissions and proceedings under the inquiry procedure.

28. In relation to inquiry No. 2010/1, the Committee decided to include a summary of its activities[2] in its annual report to the General Assembly, in accordance with article 12 of the Optional Protocol.

29. On 24, 27 and 28 February 2014, the Committee discussed its draft findings, comments and recommendations in relation to inquiry No. 2011/1.

30. In relation to submissions Nos. 2011/2 and 2011/3, the Committee, after an assessment of the information received from the source of information and of the observations submitted by the State party concerned, in each case decided to defer to the fifty-eighth session of the Committee its decision on whether or not to designate one or more of its members to conduct an inquiry.

31. In relation to submissions Nos. 2011/4 and 2012/1, the Committee decided to request additional information from the sources of information.

32. In relation to submission No. 2013/1, the Committee decided to send a reminder asking the State party concerned to submit, within two months, its observations with regard to the information received under article 8 of the Optional Protocol.

[2] On 2 June 2008, the Committee received a joint submission under article 8 of the Optional Protocol from three non-governmental organizations alleging grave and systematic violations of rights set forth in the Convention by the Philippines, namely the alleged failure of the State party to provide sexual and reproductive health services to women in the City of Manila resulting in unnecessary and preventable maternal deaths, unplanned and unwanted pregnancies, and unsafe abortions. At its forty-second session, held from 20 October to 7 November 2008, the Committee, based on a preliminary assessment of the information received, decided to transmit the information to the State party and to request it to submit observations with regard to such information by 15 March 2009, in accordance with article 8, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol. On 5 November 2009, the State party submitted its observations to the Committee. At its forty-fifth session, held from 18 January to 5 February 2010, the Committee, in the light of all the information at its disposal, decided to establish an inquiry. At its forty-sixth session, held from 12 to 30 July 2010, the Committee designated two of its members, Violeta Neubauer and Pramila Patten, to conduct the inquiry, in accordance with article 8, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol and rule 84 of the Committee's rules of procedure. The designated members undertook a visit to the territory of the State party from 19 to 23 November 2012, with the consent of the State party. At its fifty-sixth session, held from 30 September to 18 October 2013, the Committee adopted its findings of the inquiry, which were transmitted to the State party on 25 September 2013, in accordance with article 8, paragraph 3, of the Optional Protocol. The Committee invited the State party to submit its observations on said findings within six months, in accordance with article 8, paragraph 4, of the Optional Protocol. No such observations were received by 26 March 2014 upon the expiry of the six-month period. By a note verbale dated 28 March 2014, the State party requested an extension of the six-month time limit for submitting its observations on the Committee's findings.

33. In relation to submission No. 2013/2, the Committee decided to defer to the fifty-eighth session of the Committee, its examination of the information received under article 8 of the Optional Protocol.

34. The Committee received one additional submission under article 8 of the Optional Protocol, registered as submission No. 2014/1, and requested the Secretariat to prepare a summary of that submission.

Chapter VI
Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

35. During its fifty-seventh session, the Committee considered agenda item 7, on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.

Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 7

Enhancing the working methods of the Committee

36. The Secretariat informed the Committee about the status of submission of overdue reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention.

37. On 14 February 2014, the Chair, Nicole Ameline, briefed the Committee about her participation in the informal consultation of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies held in Washington, D.C., on 31 January and 1 February 2014, during which the Chairs met with the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on treaty body strengthening, the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and of Tunisia to the United Nations in New York.

38. On 17 and 21 February 2014, the Secretariat informed the Committee about the outcome of the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system.

39. On 27 February 2014, the Secretary of the Committee against Torture, João Nataf, briefed the Committee on the experience of that Committee in applying the simplified reporting procedure (or list of issues prior to the reporting procedure) and in dealing with inquiries under article 20 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Dates of future sessions of the Committee

40. In accordance with the calendar of conferences, the following dates were confirmed for the Committee's fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions and related meetings:

Fifty-eighth session (Geneva)

(a) Twenty-ninth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 25 to 27 June 2014;

(b) Fifty-eighth session: 30 June to 18 July 2014;

(c) Pre-session working group for the sixtieth session: 21 to 25 July 2014.

Fifty-ninth session (Geneva)

(d) Thirtieth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 15 to 17 October 2014;

(e) Fifty-ninth session: 20 October to 7 November 2014;

(f) Pre-session working group for the sixty-first session: 10 to 14 November 2014.

Reports to be considered at future sessions of the Committee

41. The Committee confirmed that it will consider the reports of the following States parties at its fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth sessions:

Fifty-eighth session:

Central African Republic

Georgia

India

Lithuania

Mauritania

Peru

Swaziland

Syrian Arab Republic

It is noted that the consideration of the Central African Republic in the absence of a report had originally been scheduled for the fifty-third session. However, the Central African Republic submitted its combined initial to fifth periodic reports on 26 June 2012, and the consideration was subsequently postponed to the fifty-eighth session to allow for the translation of the report as well as the establishment of a new and/or updated list of issues at the pre-session working group.

Fifty-ninth session:

Belgium

Brunei Darussalam

China

Ghana

Guinea

Poland

Solomon Islands

Venezuela

It is noted that the consideration of Solomon Islands in the absence of a report had originally been scheduled for the fifty-fourth session. However, Solomon Islands submitted its combined initial to third periodic reports on 30 January 2013, and the consideration was subsequently postponed to the fifty-ninth session to allow for the translation of the report and the establishment of a new and/or updated list of issues at the pre-session working group.

Chapter VII
Implementation of article 21 of the Convention

42. During its fifty-seventh session, the Committee considered agenda item 6, on the implementation of article 21 of the Convention.

Action taken by the Committee under agenda item 6

Working group on harmful practices

43. The working group met during the session and revised the latest version of the draft joint CEDAW/CRC general recommendation/comment on harmful practices.

Working group on gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum and statelessness

44. The working group met during the session.

45. On 25 February 2014, the Committee discussed the second part of the text, dealing with nationality and statelessness of the draft general recommendation on gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum and statelessness.

Working group on access to justice

46. The working group met during the session and discussed a first draft of the general recommendation on women's access to justice. It decided to circulate the finalized first draft to the other members of the Committee and to stakeholders between sessions.

Working group on rural women

47. The working group met during the session and endorsed an outline of the draft general recommendation.

Working group on gender equality in the context of climate change and natural disasters

48. The working group met during the session and discussed an outline of the concept note, in the presence of representatives from the Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Working group on the right to education

49. The working group met during the session and submitted a revised concept note to the Committee. The Committee endorsed the concept note and decided to hold a half-day of general discussion on the right to education during the fifty-eighth session.

Working Group on working methods

50. The working group met during the session and discussed, inter alia, the possibility of establishing an intersessional mechanism to respond to urgent matters.

The working group also proposed a decision that was adopted by the Committee (see decision 57/III above).

Focal points on sexual and reproductive rights

51. The focal point and alternate focal points met during the session to revise the draft statement on sexual and reproductive health and rights. (See annex II to part III of the present report.)

Chapter VIII
Provisional agenda for the fifty-eighth session

52. The Committee considered the draft provisional agenda for its fifty-eighth session on 28 February 2014, and approved the following provisional agenda for that session:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Report of the Chair on activities carried out between the fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth sessions of the Committee.
4. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
5. Follow-up to concluding observations of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Implementation of articles 21 and 22 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
7. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
8. Activities of the Committee under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
9. Provisional agenda for the fifty-ninth session of the Committee.
10. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-eighth session.

Chapter IX
Adoption of the report

53. The Committee considered the draft report on its fifty-seventh session on 28 February 2014 and adopted it as orally revised during the discussion.

Annex I

Decision 57/I
Statement by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the post-2015 development agenda and the elimination of discrimination against women

Adopted on 26 February 2014

1. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the discussion regarding the post-2015 development agenda. As the international body charged with overseeing the implementation of the legal obligations of the 187 States parties under the Convention the Committee is keenly aware of the nexus between development and the realization of women's rights. The near universal ratification of the Convention, together with the vast experience of the Committee since its establishment in 1982 in relation to women and development garnered through its supervisory mandate, underlines the importance of the Committee's expertise in shaping the conceptual design of the post-2015 development agenda.

The Committee recalls that the Millennium Declaration, an unprecedented global consensus by the States Members of the United Nations which presented a vision for achieving sustainable development, identifies gender equality as an essential component for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Committee also recalls the commitments made by the international community in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. They both affirm the need to combat violence against women and the implementation of the Convention. The Committee acknowledges the positive outcomes resulting from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. It recalls that Millennium Development Goal 3 explicitly sought to promote gender equality and empower women. However, the Millennium Development Goals did not entirely embrace this full vision of gender equality, adopting only a narrow range of indicators to reflect a very narrow range of issues important for the elimination of discrimination against women. The Committee also notes that progress in the realization of this goal has been tracked through four indicators, which represent narrow, albeit important, aspects of gender equality, namely, participation of women and girls in education, improving the literacy ratio, employment and improving the proportion of women in national parliaments. Through its regular discussions with States parties on the implementation of the Convention, the Committee has been tracking the degree to which women and girls enjoy their rights. The international community now has the opportunity to embrace a new paradigm that builds on the gaps and lessons of the Millennium Development Goals and truly aims to eliminate discrimination against women. The Committee considers that the international community should deliver on its promise in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of a social and international order in which all human rights can be fully realized for all persons.

2. A human rights-based approach to sustainable development

International human rights law provides critical normative standards that are intrinsically linked to development, such as those related to food, education, health, housing, non-discrimination, political participation, freedom of expression and

freedom of assembly. It also provides strong standards on equality and non-discrimination for all. The Convention prohibits any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex, which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the enjoyment and exercise of rights by women on an equal basis with men. The Committee has thus repeatedly articulated a vision of substantive equality which takes account of the reality of women's and girls' lives that is impacted both by consequences of the past as well as current inequalities between women and men, and requires measures to address both direct and indirect discrimination against women.

The post-2015 framework should be grounded in this existing international human rights framework, with a view to addressing all facets of the development challenge. The Convention, along with the other international human rights treaties, establishes a normative framework built and accepted by States which sets with precision the minimum guarantees for the individual. A human rights-based approach to development ensures that rights are used as a means to promoting development — sustainable development will continue to be a distant dream if women's rights, in particular, are not prioritized. In addition, and more fundamentally, a human rights-based approach ensures that rights, including the rights related to gender equality, are the ultimate end of development. The Committee underscores the fact that anchoring the post-2015 framework in human rights standards would affirm that development is not only a matter of policy choices for countries but rather, a matter of human rights obligations. This fills the development agenda with the notions of accountability for those with obligations, and empowerment for those with rights. Building the new agenda on a firm foundation of equality and non-discrimination would ensure that no one is left behind. It is also essential to reaffirm the indivisibility of human rights, recognizing that efforts to eliminate discrimination in access to health care for women, for example, will founder without respecting the right to freedom of choice and autonomy in respect of sexual and reproductive health care.

3. The Millennium Development Goals on gender equality and women's empowerment

From its experience, the Committee knows that traditional models of development that are based predominantly on economic growth, the expansion of the democratic space and peace, do not automatically lead to gender equality and the realization of women's rights and empowerment. For this reason, later models developed by feminist scholars envisaged addressing the needs and role of women in development processes. Yet, these models have also not resulted in the complete elimination of gender-based discrimination and the full realization of women's rights and empowerment. Focusing only on the symptoms and manifestations of women's exclusion (e.g., lack of income, education or health) rather than their structural causes (e.g., discrimination, lack of access to justice and to resources, inadequate political representation) has often led to narrow, discretionary measures aimed at addressing short-term needs, which do not allow for an understanding of the real contribution of women to sustainable development. Moreover, recent studies estimate that over one third of women worldwide have suffered violence in their lifetime, which has dire implications for women's enjoyment of their human rights, as well as their economic, social and cultural potential. The failure of the Millennium Development Goals to include gender-based violence and to address

discrimination against women in access to justice, are major shortcomings which must be rectified.

It is clear that sustainable development is utterly unachievable if 50 per cent of the population is neglected. We know that empowering women and girls not only enhances their ability to claim their rights, but also has powerful effects on social change and economic growth.

4. The way forward

The Committee's efforts have thus already helped to provide a strong framework for bridging the accountability mechanism gap of the Millennium Development Goals and also for bringing to the fore relevant data from countries on women and development. The Committee, taking stock of its experience, suggests the following:

- First, a post-2015 architecture that is explicitly based on the promotion of all human rights, addressing people's right to be free from want but also free from fear
- Second, the post-2015 agenda should include a "transformative stand-alone goal" on gender equality and women's empowerment to underline the centrality of the rights of women and girls to future development gains seeking not only formal equality, but also substantive equality. A specific consideration should be given to indicators that capture situations experienced predominantly by women and girls, related to gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health, maternity and family leave policies and forced and child marriages
- Third, a commitment to gender equality and to the principle of equality and non-discrimination more broadly should be mainstreamed throughout all goals, to ensure that the new agenda does not exclude those facing discrimination, or worse, that it deepens existing inequalities. This can be achieved by ensuring that all indicators are disaggregated by sex, in order to give a clear and disaggregated view of progress over time. Together with discrimination on the basis of sex, all grounds of discrimination prohibited by international human rights law must be addressed in this process, as women regularly face multiple or intersecting forms of discrimination. This could significantly expand the possibility of capturing not just the situation of women, but the situation of rural and urban women, women with disabilities, indigenous women, and women and girls from other minority groups.
- Fourth, targets should be universal or "zero" targets that are more ambitious than the Millennium Development Goal targets to ensure that no one is left behind, including women facing multiple or intersecting forms of discrimination who are the least advantaged in most societies. Clear timelines should be set to ensure that steady progress is made to reach all groups and reduce the inequalities between different groups. For example, setting interim targets would go a long way in ensuring that continuous steps are taken towards reaching everyone without discrimination.
- Fifth, accountability mechanisms will be essential for ensuring that progress is tracked and that States are accountable to their populations. Explicitly tying development objectives to universally agreed human rights obligations

supports a shift in paradigm — from a discourse of charity and expediency to one of rights and legal obligations. With this approach comes the need for duty bearers to be held accountable for achievements. Whatever accountability mechanism is adopted, the Committee (along with the other human rights treaty bodies) should have a critical role in ensuring accountability for gender equality through its periodic review of State party reports, its consideration of individual communications and its inquiry procedure. It would, therefore, be useful for example, if the new accountability framework could ensure the systematic exchange of information between the treaty bodies and any new accountability mechanism designed to monitor the new goals, targets and indicators. Under its reporting procedure, the Committee has found that Millennium Development Goal 3, despite its narrow focus, has been of great value in galvanizing efforts that have led to improved data collection and accountability. In its authoritative guidance to State parties to the Convention expounded through general recommendation No. 9, the Committee seeks from State parties the submission of reliable data disaggregated by sex in order to fully understand the situation of women.

5. Conclusion

The Committee considers the post-2015 development agenda a unique opportunity for accelerating measures aimed at addressing critical issues regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women by adopting a stand-alone goal on gender equality and mainstreaming gender in all goals, including through disaggregating all indicators by sex. All goals, targets and indicators should be aligned with human rights standards. Based on its mandate, the Committee shall continue to be a critical pillar for the future work of the post-2015 development agenda in partly addressing, through its various procedures under the Convention, which remains the most comprehensive internationally binding instrument on women's rights, the deficiencies in accountability and in implementation by the multilateral system and various stakeholders in this area. The Committee also recognizes the critical role that civil society organizations play in development and in the implementation of the Convention. It, therefore, expresses the hope that the international community will continue its engagement with them in the future work on the post-2015 development agenda.

The Committee, also, calls upon the international community to ensure a strong accountability framework that holds States accountable to their citizens. On this point, the Committee joins the statement of the Chair of the human rights treaty bodies on the post-2015 development agenda in requesting the strengthening of the treaty bodies as critical players in the outcome and the accountability arrangements of the post-2015 development architecture.

Annex II

Decision 57/II
Statement by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on sexual and reproductive health: beyond the 2014 review of the International Conference on Population and Development

Adopted on 26 February 2014

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women welcomes the ongoing review of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action. The Programme of Action, adopted by consensus by 179 States in Cairo in 1994, was a groundbreaking achievement and heralded a new era where the human rights of every individual are paramount. Member States of the United Nations recognized reproductive rights as based on internationally accepted human rights standards, and as codified in the human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which the Committee oversees. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action reiterated these commitments. In order to further the implementation of the Convention, the Committee submits this statement as its contribution to the review of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014. This is based on its expertise under the Convention and Optional Protocol stemming from the reporting, individual complaints and inquiry procedures as well as its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on article 12 (women and health), which all show that inequality and discrimination are major factors preventing women and girls from enjoying "the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health".

The Committee acknowledges that there is much progress to celebrate. However, every State can and should do more to ensure the full respect, protection and fulfilment of sexual and reproductive rights, in line with human rights obligations. The review process of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 is, therefore, a critical moment to recommit to human rights standards on the sexual and reproductive health rights of women and men, girls and boys, and ensure that the prohibition of discrimination based on sex and gender and the protection and promotion of human rights are at the centre of any efforts towards sustainable development and social justice. The review will also define one of the most critical parts for women and girls, of the post-2015 development agenda. As such, it should foresee strong accountability mechanisms and also ensure that there is system-wide collaboration between the various actors at the United Nations, regional and national levels as well as with non-governmental organizations.

Many States Members of the United Nations have devised innovative strategies and programmes to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights. However, across all regions, there are still serious deficiencies in the protection of these fundamental rights and freedoms. The right to health, which includes the right to bodily autonomy, and encompasses sexual and reproductive freedom, is often violated. Violence against women and girls (if not outright torture, or cruel and inhuman and degrading treatment) and the multiple and intersectional forms of

discrimination based on sex and gender that they experience, impact heavily on their sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Committee continuously addresses discriminatory gender stereotypes and harmful practices that contribute to, and perpetuate, these violations. The Committee, therefore, consistently advises States parties to the Convention to take all practical and legislative measures to prevent, prohibit, punish and redress these acts, whether committed by State or non-State actors.

Upholding the right to health for women and girls requires health services, including sexual and reproductive information, counselling and services that are available, accessible, affordable and of good quality. The Committee has observed that failure of a State party to provide services and the criminalization of some services that only women require is a violation of women's reproductive rights and constitutes discrimination against them.

According to the Committee, protecting human rights related to sexual and reproductive health requires that "all health services [...] be consistent with the human rights of women, including the rights to autonomy, privacy, confidentiality, informed consent and choice". Thus, the empowerment of women and their capacity to decide are at the heart of the protection of their rights in this field. The right to autonomy requires measures to guarantee the right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children, and the right to access sexual and reproductive health information and services with the consent of the individual alone. The right to enter freely into marriage is also related to choice and autonomy.

Measures are also required to ban and eliminate the practice of forced and child marriages, which often lead to early pregnancies that are risky for the life and/or health of girls. The provision of, inter alia, safe abortion and post-abortion care; maternity care; timely diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV), breast and reproductive cancers, and infertility; and access to accurate and comprehensive information about sexuality and reproduction are all part of the right to sexual and reproductive health. Furthermore, access to comprehensive services and a wide range of contraceptive methods, including emergency contraception, is a fundamental aspect of ensuring sexual and reproductive rights. States parties have obligations to enable women to prevent unwanted pregnancies, including through family planning and education on sexual and reproductive health. The Committee has also called upon States parties to address the power imbalances between men and women, which often impede women's autonomy, particularly in the exercise of choices on safe and responsible sex practices.

Unsafe abortion is a leading cause of maternal mortality and morbidity. As such, States parties should legalize abortion at least in cases of rape, incest, threats to the life and/or health of the mother, or severe foetal impairment, as well as provide women with access to quality post-abortion care, especially in cases of complications resulting from unsafe abortions. States parties should also remove punitive measures for women who undergo abortion. States parties should further organize health services so that the exercise of conscientious objection does not impede their effective access to reproductive health-care services, including abortion and post-abortion care.

Furthermore, special attention is needed to ensure that adolescents have access to accurate information about their sexual and reproductive health and rights,

including responsible sexual behaviour, prevention of early pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health should, therefore, be integrated in school curricula. States parties should further address negative stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes with regard to the sexuality of adolescents, with a view to ensuring that these do not interfere with access to information and education on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Strengthening health systems, improving their operation, monitoring and evaluating outcomes from a gender and human rights perspective contribute to the improvement of the sexual and reproductive health of women and, in particular, the reduction of maternal mortality and morbidity, and the reinforcement of the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases, which are considered, at least in part, products of discrimination against women. It, therefore, behoves States parties to ensure the allocation of adequate budgetary resources to reproductive health and rights programmes.

The review process of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 affords the international community and all stakeholders an opportunity to take stock of the progress that has been made in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Most importantly, it presents a unique opportunity for upscaling measures in this area with a view to ensuring that the right to "the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health" does not remain a distant dream for women and girls. The Committee, therefore, calls upon the international community to take this opportunity to renew its commitment towards sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Annex III

Decision 57/V
Decision of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the servicing of its work under article 8 of the Optional Protocol

Adopted on 28 February 2014

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women,

Bearing in mind its mandate under article 8 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

Noting that the Committee is facing a considerable, and increasing, backlog of inquiry submissions received under article 8 of the Optional Protocol,

Noting also that preliminary assessments of information in several of these submissions so far received by the Committee, pursuant to article 8 of the Optional Protocol, indicate grave or systematic violations of rights set forth in the Convention,

Acknowledging the support provided by the Committee's current secretariat in servicing the Committee's work under article 8 of the Optional Protocol,

Concerned that the Committee and its secretariat lack the necessary resources to deal in a timely fashion with preliminary assessments of submissions and to dispose of all current requests for inquiries,

Concerned further that the lack of adequate resources has caused delays in the consideration of inquiry submissions and presents the risk that the consideration of information indicating grave or systematic violations will be prolonged,

Recognizing the expertise of the Petitions and Inquiries Section in the handling of individual communications and that it is better equipped than the Committee's secretariat, and the need to ensure consistency in dealing with all matters under the Optional Protocol,

Decides to request the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the light of recent developments on treaty body strengthening, to designate and mandate the Petitions and Inquiries Section as the responsible section within the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to service the Committee's work under article 8 of the Optional Protocol and to provide the Section with the necessary additional human and financial resources.

Annex IV

Documents before the Committee at its fifty-seventh session

Document number	*Title or description*
CEDAW/C/57/1	Provisional agenda and annotations
CEDAW/C/57/2	Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
CEDAW/C/57/3	Report of the International Labour Organization
Reports of States parties	
CEDAW/C/BHR/3	Third periodic report of Bahrain
CEDAW/C/CMR/4-5	Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Cameroon
CEDAW/C/FIN/7	Seventh periodic report of Finland
CEDAW/C/IRQ/4-6	Combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Iraq
CEDAW/C/KAZ/3-4	Combined third and fourth periodic reports of Kazakhstan
CEDAW/C/QAT/1	Initial report of Qatar
CEDAW/C/SLE/6	Sixth periodic report of Sierra Leone

Annex V

Report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on its twenty-eighth session

1. The Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women held its twenty-eighth session from 4 to 7 February 2014 in Geneva. All members attended the session.

2. At the beginning of the session, the Working Group adopted its agenda as set out in the appendix to the present report.

3. The Working Group then reviewed an update on 16 new pieces of correspondence received since 20 September 2013, as prepared by the secretariat.

4. The Working Group decided to appoint Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla as case rapporteur for communication No. 61/2013, Dubravka Šimonović as case rapporteur for communication No. 62/2014, and Yoko Hayashi as case rapporteur for communication No. 65/2014; all three communications had been registered. The Working Group also decided to register two new communications (Nos. 66/2014 and 67/2014) and to transmit them to the States parties concerned. Niklas Bruun and Pramila Patten were appointed as case rapporteurs for communications Nos. 66/2014 and 67/2014, respectively.

5. The Working Group then reviewed all unregistered correspondence received since its previous session. It took note of the action taken by the secretariat so far, and decided on a number of requests for clarification/explanation or for replies to be sent to authors.

6. The Working Group discussed three draft recommendations in relation to communications No. 34/2011 against the Philippines; No. 36/2011 against the Netherlands (both draft views finding violations); and No. 39/2012 against the Netherlands (draft inadmissibility decision), respectively. All three recommendations were adopted by consensus and will be referred to the Committee for adoption.

7. The Working Group decided to discontinue its consideration of communication No. 41/2012 against Ecuador, as the author of the communication had failed to provide proof of the alleged victim's consent to submit the communication.

8. The Working Group members proceeded to an inventory of all case files for the communications for which they had been appointed case rapporteurs. The Working Group then reviewed the status of all pending cases registered and had a discussion on each of them.

9. The Working Group further decided to grant the requests of the States parties concerned to consider the admissibility of the communication separately from the merits (split requests) in relation to four communications (Nos. 51/2013, 59/2013, 62/2013 and 64/2013). The Working Group rejected a split request of the State party concerned in relation to communication No. 52/2013.

10. The Working Group requested the secretariat to prepare, on a priority basis, draft recommendations for the next session, bearing in mind the above-mentioned discussions. Thus, for its twenty-ninth session (25 to 27 June 2014), the Working Group requested the secretariat to prepare three draft recommendations in relation to communications Nos. 30/2011, 46/2012 and 47/2012.

11. The Working Group discussed the follow-up situation in nine cases where the follow-up dialogue remained ongoing, and agreed on the possible action to be taken, for consideration by the Committee. It considered the follow-up dialogue with the States parties to be ongoing in all nine cases under follow-up examination, namely, concerning Belarus (No. 23/2009), Brazil (No. 17/2008), Bulgaria (Nos. 20/2008, 31/2011, 32/2011), Canada (No. 19/2008), Peru (No. 22/2009), the Philippines (No. 18/2008) and Turkey (No. 28/2010).

12. The Working Group decided to request informal meetings during the Committee's fifty-seventh session (10 to 28 February 2014) to discuss follow-up matters with representatives of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva of Belarus, Brazil, Peru and the Philippines.

13. The Working Group expressed its appreciation for the logistical and substantive services provided to it by the Petitions and Inquiries Section of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in particular for the quality of the draft views and decisions on individual communications under the Optional Protocol. In the light of the significant increase in the number of cases that are procedurally ready to be drafted, the Working Group expressed concern about the limited capacity of the secretariat, which currently cannot prepare more than three draft recommendations per session, owing to its lack of adequate human and financial resources. The Working Group called upon the OHCHR to take all necessary measures to enable the Petitions and Inquiries Section to prepare additional draft recommendations for the Committee in order to avoid a deterioration of the existing situation and the accumulation of an excessive backlog, which would undermine the credibility of the Committee and that of the OHCHR.

Action taken at the present session

14. The Working Group decided:

(a) To refer for adoption to the Committee a recommendation in relation to the draft views (violation) on communication No. 34/2011 against the Philippines, with all members supporting the recommendation;

(b) To refer for adoption to the Committee a recommendation in relation to the draft views (violation) on communication No. 36/2011 against the Netherlands, with all members supporting the recommendation;

(c) To refer for adoption to the Committee a recommendation in relation to the draft decision (inadmissibility) on communication No. 39/2012 against the Netherlands, with all members supporting the recommendation;

(d) To discontinue consideration of communication No. 41/2012 against Ecuador, in the absence of the written consent of the alleged victim, despite a specific request by the Working Group for the author to provide such written consent;

(e) To request the secretariat to prepare draft recommendations for the twenty-ninth session of the Working Group regarding communications Nos. 30/2011, 46/2012 and 47/2012;

(f) To accede to the requests of the States parties concerned to examine the admissibility of the communication separately from the merits (split request) in relation to communications Nos. 51/2013, 59/2013, 62/2013 and 64/2013;

(g) To reject the split request of the State party concerned in relation to communication No. 52/2013;

(h) To appoint Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla as case rapporteur for communication No. 61/2013;

(i) To appoint Dubravka Šimonović as case rapporteur for communication No. 62/2013;

(j) To appoint Yoko Hayashi as case rapporteur for communication No. 65/2014;

(k) To register a new communication as case No. 66/2014 and to appoint Niklas Bruun as case rapporteur;

(l) To register a new communication as case No. 67/2014 and to appoint Pramila Patten as case rapporteur;

(m) To request the secretariat to keep uploading on the Optional Protocol Extranet, academic resources that were cited in the note by the secretariat and to make available copies of excerpts as requested;

(n) To request the secretariat to arrange meetings with representatives of the Permanent Missions of Belarus, Brazil, Peru and the Philippines to the United Nations Office at Geneva to discuss follow-up on views on individual communications during the fifty-seventh session of the Committee; and to arrange a follow-up meeting with the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations Office at Geneva during the twenty-ninth session of the Working Group June 2014.

(o) To request the Chair of the Working Group to raise the Working Group's concern, as reflected in paragraph 13 above, at the opening of the fifty-seventh session of the Committee, on 10 February 2014.

15. The Working Group decided to hold its twenty-ninth session in Geneva, from 25 to 27 June 2014.

Appendix

Agenda of the twenty-eighth session of the Working Group

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Review of steps and activities undertaken since the previous session.
3. New communications registered and appointment of case rapporteurs.
4. Discussion on cases ready for adoption/split requests.
5. Cases for discontinuance.
6. Update on communications (registered cases).
7. Update on follow-up to views.
8. Discussion on cases ready for adoption and prioritization.
9. Adoption of the report concerning the Working Group on its twenty-eighth session.

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